

Important information about the Nov. 12 treatment for red swamp crayfish

The DNR will chemically treat Esquire Estates pond and a small pond behind the Germantown police station on Thursday, Nov. 12, as part of efforts to try to rid them of a destructive, new invasive crayfish.

The red swamp crayfish, native to the southern U.S., is new to Wisconsin and is considered a serious threat to fish, frog and crayfish populations, fish habitat, and water quality. Its abilities to reproduce rapidly and move over land increase the need to get rid of it quickly before it spreads. The chemical treatment is part of an overall response plan that will continue using other tools including trapping.

The treatment will use sodium hypochlorite, the same chemical found in the household bleach people use in their homes to clean laundry and disinfect surfaces. The DNR will apply the product under the surface of the Esquire Estates pond at 50 parts per million, a much lower concentration than the 200 parts per million the manufacturer suggests for washing machines.

At that level, the chlorine from the product will be toxic to the crayfish and the fathead minnows and sunfish in the pond. People should not enter the pond until the safety signs are removed; direct contact with the product can irritate skin and eyes. Residents may notice a chlorine smell. People who are sensitive to odors may want to close their windows and fresh air intakes.

Here is more important information about the Nov. 12 treatment:

- DNR's application to use the sodium hypochlorite for the crayfish control has been approved by the state Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As well, DNR's air toxicologist has reviewed the treatment plan and concluded there is no threat to human health.
- The outlot along Western Avenue will be the center of activity. DNR crews will arrive around 8 a.m. to set up, with the application to be finished by 4 p.m.
- DNR staff certified in chemical treatments will use boats to apply the product under the water's surface at the Esquire Estates pond. Staff on foot will use backpack sprayers with wands to squirt higher concentrations into the crayfish burrows. Backpack sprayers will be used on the pond behind the police station.
- You may notice DNR staff wearing protective clothing and respirators when working directly with concentrated sodium hypochlorite. This is standard DNR equipment used when working directly with any chemicals in concentrated form.
- We expect the treatment to kill the crayfish in 12 to 42 hours. We will closely monitor chlorine levels, air quality, and effect on the crayfish.
- We believe the chemical treatment will be effective, but there is no guarantee of success. The species is new to Wisconsin and there are no pesticides normally labeled for use in Wisconsin to kill crayfish. External research, as well as our internal research and small-scale tests, however, suggest that sodium hypochlorite will be effective.



Trapping has removed 2,000 red swamp crayfish from the Esquire Estates pond but chemical treatments are also needed to get rid of this rapidly reproducing invader.

How you can help

We really appreciate the help, support and patience shown by Esquire Estate residents as we work together to eradicate this new invader from your pond and from Wisconsin.

Please help ensure the success of the chemical treatment and your safety by taking these steps:

✓ Avoid the staging area along the Western Avenue outlot. Traffic barricades and yellow tape will cordon off the area to keep people safe from trucks moving around and to allow us to finish the application quickly.

✓ If your property abuts the pond, stay behind the black fence erected around the pond. This is the treatment area.

✓ Observe all safety signs and do not touch the pond water, let your pet drink from it or your children play around it, until we take the signs down.

✓ DNR project manager Randy Schumacher will be on site by the outlot on the day of the treatment to answer any of your questions.

For questions on other days, please contact:

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